20: Hart OA14 Central Bisayan OA14

774, 776, 769

/For a discussion of the role of spirits and ghosts in agriculture, see category 243, pp. 342-359. --Analyst/

trees. The new unpainted wooden residence of the parish priest is near the church. The plaza of Siaton is unimproved except for a circle of cement used for fiesta dances, now covered with pungent copra, and a basketball court. Across the street from the plaza is a small wooden building which houses the telegraph and postoffice and offices of the municipal agricultural agent and the government midwife. To the rear of the postoffice building is a neat wooden Protestant church.

The new elementary school is the pride of the community and the center for social gatherings--functions usurped from the church. There are three painted wooden buildings, but the other structures are temporary classrooms of bamboo and nipa. The schoolyard is covered with a green lawn and there are cement paths lined with oleander and small shrubs. By the domestic science building is a struggling rose garden which every "progressive" school must have. Across the street from the school buildings are several sari-sari stores which cater to the appetites of the school children. Farther west a new concrete bridge spans the wide, shallow (in the dry season) Siaton River. Overlooking the bridge is Pangligiran hill where Don Antoy, a legendary supernatural, lives in a grand palace of marble and gold, invisible to ordinary humans.

The houses of the poblacion are similar to those seen along the National Road. However, there are some white wooden houses where local officials live. To the

proper by the muddy Caticugan Creek. This is a rocky sandy area where the Siaton River once flowed. 133

Walking through the community one speculates that few visible changes have occurred during the past several centuries. The houses are basically the same, bamboo and nipa and rattan. The wooden plow that lies in the field must have been similar to that used by the owner's great-grandparents. Many pigs still feed from hollow stone troughs. Spears and blow-guns are found in some houses and ancient rites precede a wild pig hunt. Yet the modest chapel with its tire rim "bell" and the houses with family altars of plaster saints betoken the Catholic Spaniards. The old bow and arrow, used to shoot fish in the river, have been modified, for boys now hunt their prey with arrows of steel umbrella rib, propelled by strips of inner tubing. The barrio and elementary schools with coeducational facilities and stress on "integration" bespeak American influence. As one talks with the people and studies their way of life, the pre-Hispanic cultural base emerges: beliefs in unseen sprites of shaded spring and wooded hill, in blonde-haired dwarfs that race happily in the drainage canals, in the placating of departed souls with food offerings and various modified pagan agricultural rites. The very language reflects Hindu contacts. The wooden handles 178 177 [176]

When the Moros learned of Uanti's death, they returned to burn the church and take captives. However, the people were informed before the Moros arrived. They piled many big stones at the top of the bluff, overlooking the path which the Moros had to take to reach the barrio. When the Moros started up the path, the stones were rolled down, frightening them away. In three months the Moros were back at Bonbonon. Again the people had been forewarned of their raid. Corio, Uanti's son, was prepared. The people now had a small cannon, purchased from Boholano peddlers, loaded with powder, rice husks and a pearl wrapped in a cloth. The cannon was aimed at the Moro praos in the bay below and fired. "When the cannon exploded everybody was surprised because the ten praos of the Moros were all wrapped in fire. Most of the Moros jumped into the sea." It was said that this incident led the Moros to believe that Uanti was still alive and that they never returned to Bonbonon.[42]

175* 726

It was these constant Moro attacks that led to the selection of the present patron saint of Siaton poblacion. Borja (Borca), the third parish priest of Siaton, and the first to visit Bonbonon, suggested that the people should choose San Nicolas de Barri as their patron saint. "For according to the priest the saint

175* 776

[42] The Cadiane manuscript lists thirty-one men who became capitans, or later tenientes under the Americans at Bonbonon. Three or four families furnished most of the leaders such as Paladar, Jandug, Janala, or Pagules.

175* 776 ●

could fight against the Moros and also could help the boatmen when they were overtaken by bad weather."

175* 793

The first priest assigned to the Siaton parish is said to have been Siptin which possibly is a nickname. Suniga was the sixth priest of Siaton who visited the settlement before 1777. The Gadiane manuscript does not give the dates when these early priests were assigned with the exception that Father Jose Barido was replaced by Carias in 1827 or 1828.[43] With these two priests other printed sources begin to furnish data. Ruiz reports that Jose Arias (Carias) succeeded Jose Barredo (Barido) in 1831.[44] Arias was given the title of Acting Curate of Dauin and Siaton which Ruiz states indicates the growing pre-eminence of Dauin over Siaton. Following Arias, according to Gadiane, were four priests, the last one known as Prebitero Felix the Bisayan, the first Filipino assigned to the Siaton parish.[45] The assignment of these priests and the creation of new parishes indicates a growing population in southeastern Negros and a diminution of Moro raids.

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[43] It is possible that Siptin is Jose Fernandez de Setien who came to Dumaguete in 1754. Gadiane lists all the "parish priests of Siaton," although only the first names (or nicknames) of ten priests of the total forty-seven are given.

[44] Ruiz, op. cit., p. 151.

[45] Gadiane states in 1837 or 1838 two priests were living in Siaton, Areas and Prebitero Felix; the latter may be Felix Ramos, the first substitute priest of Dauin in 1847. Ruiz, op. cit., p. 146-7. Gadiane does not state if Siptin was an Augustinian or Jesuit. Since the Augustinians transferred their Negros missions to the Jesuits in 1628. Siptin probably was a Jesuit. (See Page 140.)